
Name of Organization: National Association of Conservation Districts

Type of Organization: Other

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Project Title: Agricultural Indicators Initiative

Project Category: Emerging Issues

Rank by Organization (if applicable): 0

Total Funding Requested (\$): 167,888 **Project Duration:** 2 Years

Abstract:

The State of the Lakes Ecosystem Conferences ((SOLEC) have been developing "a consistent, easily understood suite of indicators that will objectively represent the state of major ecosystem components across all Great Lakes basins, upon which they can report progress every two years, and upon which they can be assessed regarding achievement of the purpose of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement" (State of the Great Lakes 1999). Work continues in reviewing and refining the list, gaining acceptance by agencies and stakeholders, and building commitment to appropriate monitoring and data collection. This project will propose measurements for the Sustainable Agricultural Practices Indicator (#7028), explore additional potential indicators, and build cooperation among representatives from the agricultural industry, conservation districts, and state and federal agencies for the ongoing collection of this information.

Geographic Areas Affected by the Project**States:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illinois	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New York
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Indiana	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pennsylvania
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michigan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wisconsin
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minnesota	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ohio

Lakes:

<input type="checkbox"/> Superior	<input type="checkbox"/> Erie
<input type="checkbox"/> Huron	<input type="checkbox"/> Ontario
<input type="checkbox"/> Michigan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All Lakes

Geographic Initiatives:

<input type="checkbox"/> Greater Chicago	<input type="checkbox"/> NE Ohio	<input type="checkbox"/> NW Indiana	<input type="checkbox"/> SE Michigan	<input type="checkbox"/> Lake St. Clair
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Primary Affected Area of Concern: Not Applicable

Other Affected Areas of Concern:

For Habitat Projects Only:

Primary Affected Biodiversity Investment Area:

Other Affected Biodiversity Investment Areas:

Problem Statement:

Over 95% of the land in the midwest states is privately owned, of which 168 million acres are in agricultural use. There are 129 million acres of cropland producing two-thirds of the nation's corn and soybeans which require the application of fertilizers and pesticides. It is estimated there are 16 million beef cattle, 5.7 million dairy, 37 million hogs, 215 million chickens and 96 million turkeys generating 300 million tons of manure annually. It is obvious that agriculture plays a key role in the Great Lakes ecosystem. Many of these farming operations have incorporated a variety of conservation practices through the services of local conservation districts and their state and federal partners, including the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Any one or more of these practices may serve as quality measurements for the SOLEC Sustainable Agricultural Practices Indicator (#7028). In order for this Indicator to be useful, it is necessary that: (1) those practices that are appropriate for measurement and for which information can be collected are identified; and (2) stakeholders come to agreement on the use of these practices. In addition, other possible indicators within the agricultural arena should be explored for recommendation to future SOLECs.

Proposed Work Outcome:

This project will result in stakeholders' acceptance and collection of a series of measurements for the SOLEC Sustainable Agricultural Practices Indicator (#7028). For example, the number of animal manure management systems may be selected whereby the data will be collected through the 186 local conservation districts covering the Great Lakes Basin and/or their state and federal partners. One of the keys to the project will be involving agricultural representatives from conservation districts to ensure their buy-in and thus active involvement in this process. At the same time, additional potential indicators will be identified by these stakeholders. These will be proposed to future SOLECs with the current list elements: measure; purpose; ecosystem objective; endpoint; features; illustration; limitations; interpretation; and relevancies.

Project Milestones:

Dates:

Project start	07/2000
Steering Committee briefed on indicators	09/2000
Awareness campaign among districts	12/2000
Measurements collected; indicators ID'd	09/2001
Indicators reviewed at states' meetings	12/2001
Measurements collected for 2nd year	09/2002
Indicators prepared for SOLEC	09/2002
Project end	09/2002

☐ Project Addresses Environmental Justice

If So, Description of How:

☐ Project Addresses Education/Outreach

If So, Description of How:

An outreach program would be conducted among districts in the Great Lakes States to make district officials, staff and partners familiar with the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement and the resulting SOLECs. The value of the indicators would be shown, including agricultural, to establish support for the collection and use of measurements data in future years.

Project Budget:

	Federal Share Requested (\$)	Applicant's Share (\$)
Personnel:	91,225	26,000
Fringe:	16,400	0
Travel:	30,000	0
Equipment:	0	20,000
Supplies:	15,000	0
Contracts:	0	0
Construction:	0	0
Other:	0	13,680
Total Direct Costs:	152,625	59,680
Indirect Costs:	15,263	0
Total:	167,888	59,680
Projected Income:	0	0

Funding by Other Organizations (Names, Amounts, Description of Commitments):

Additional funds are being sought from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to help defray travel expenses of the district official members of the Steering Committee. An approach is also being made to agri-businesses for support in the awareness campaign.

Description of Collaboration/Community Based Support:

In keeping with conservation districts' ethic and NACD's long-term approach to business, representatives from federal and state conservation agencies, farm organizations and businesses, and conservation organizations will be invited to work collaboratively on this project through either active participation on the steering committee or through ongoing interaction with the Coordinator. NACD's Conservation Technology Information Center, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Basin's state conservation agencies, and the Great Lakes Commission will be asked to provide letters of support for the full proposal. Equally important, the 186 local conservation districts in the Basin will be asked to actively participate in collecting measurements' data for the indicators.